

CONCEPTUAL ACTIVITIES FOR CORE STABILITY

TORSO AS A CYLINDER

Common structures can be related to the structure of the human body. A column in a building is much like the torso in a human—tall, strong, and straight supports the structure best. This activity is all demonstration. Participation consists of watching and thinking about what they've seen.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Demonstrates functional relationship between posture and core stability.
- ⦿ Provides an easy activity without balance risks; it's all observation and thinking.
- ⦿ Lets the instructor be dramatic. It's fun to be dramatic!

Set It Up »

Have these items ready ahead of time:

- ⦿ Small, heavy ball, about the size of a grapefruit and 2 pounds or less (in fact, a grapefruit works great, as does a bocce ball or even a light-weight medicine ball)
- ⦿ Piece of paper
- ⦿ Small piece of tape, just in case

How to Do It »

Introduce the group to your props. They are both simple items; however, one of them will become an extraordinary item of great strength!

The Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary

- ⦿ Show your group the single piece of paper. Flap it around in the air to show how flimsy it is.
- ⦿ Show the heavy ball. Toss it and catch it as if it were an ordinary ball. "But wait!" you say. "It's not so ordinary."
- ⦿ Pass the ball around. See if you can surprise them with how heavy it actually feels. Maybe a careful toss will do the trick. Make comments such as, "Pretty heavy ball, isn't it? Can you feel its weight?" If you are using the grapefruit, you can also talk about its texture, softness, and smell, just to build tactile awareness.

Can the Paper Hold the Ball?

- ⦿ When you get the ball back, ask, "Who thinks this piece of paper can hold up the ball?" Set the ball on it and watch it fall off right away.
- ⦿ Let them talk and guess. It's okay if someone gets the right answer.
- ⦿ Begin to roll the paper to form a column. Roll it up from top to bottom. (A short column will create a stronger, stouter column.)
- ⦿ Use a very small piece of tape only if needed to get the paper to stay rolled up. (It is so much cooler to have it work without the tape, and some days it will.) Place the ball on a table in front of you.
- ⦿ Tell them this is a surprisingly strong structure. With any luck, they'll ask, "How strong is it?"

- ⦿ Place the ball on the cylinder. The rolled-up cylinder should support the ball.
- ⦿ Make your point—it was the shape of the structure that gave it strength. A column is a cylinder, built to support. The paper went from flimsy to strong and supportive just because you changed its structure.

Crinkled Cylinder

Tell them, “Suppose the column is 80 or 90 years old. It’s bent over and feels pretty old.”

- ⦿ Crumple up the column so that it’s bent and sad looking. Set it back on the table.
- ⦿ Ask them, “What happens now? Will this cylinder hold up the ball?”
- ⦿ Place the ball on top.
- ⦿ Timber!

Is All Lost?

You’ve given them a problem. Age and frailty seemingly have led to a loss of strength and structure. However, this column is about to become an ABLE Body. It has begun to do a little regular strength training, with lots of awareness and practice for posture and core stability.

- ⦿ As you talk, begin to smooth the cylinder back out.
- ⦿ Ask, “Who thinks those lost attributes might be renewable?”
- ⦿ Place the ball back on the cylinder. It should hold the ball.
- ⦿ Tell them it’s a renewable structure; it just took a little strength training, posture, and core stability. By standing tall and erect, again the paper supports an amazing amount of weight. They are no different—they can renew their strength and posture.

Live It »

The human torso is much like the cylinder. The torso provides strength and stability in the same way. Bracing the torso and using good posture makes participants much stronger and more stable. Posture and core stability are renewable strengths.